PROMOTION BOARDS

LESSONS LEARNED

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CAPT Kevin Parker
NR NAVSEA FP/LEPS HQ
(240) 228-6690
kevin.e.parker@jhuapl.edu

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Today's Objective
It's All About Your People

GOAL: Provide information for you to train your wardroom and senior enlisted

- Benefits to your career are purely incidental

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Outline

- Objective of the Board
- Board Mechanics
- What Makes a Candidate Competitive?
- Promotion Board Observations
- Recommendations

Objective
Often Forgotten Truths

Promotion Board Objective: Select the best and most fully qualified for assignment to positions of greater responsibility

- ➡ Promotion is not a reward for loyalty or good performance

How to Ensure Promotion?

- Be the best and most fully qualified!
- Ensure record accurately reflects your career

Board Mechanics (1 of 2)

- Board Precept
- Record Review
  - Generally reviewed by officer/MCPO of same designator/related rate
  - PSR annotated with noteworthy points
  - Objective score assigned (E7 - E9 only)
  - Generally takes 5-20 minutes per record
- Voting
  - Record (OSR/PSR) briefed by reviewer
  - Briefer recommends grade
  - Each member picks confidence factor (0, 25, 50, 75, 100%)
  - Votes averaged, overall confidence factor assigned
  - Generally takes 15-90 seconds per record

Board Mechanics (2 of 2)

- Results Review
  - Histogram of confidence factors
- Selection
  - Based only on the histogram
  - 3 zones: “Select,” “further consider,” “remove from consideration”
- Crunch
  - Repeat vote/review/selection for “further consider”
- Create list

➢ See selection board website for more details

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What Makes a Candidate Competitive?

Fact 1: Demonstrated, sustained outstanding leadership trumps everything else

- Board is looking for *leaders*

Fact 2: Board has very little information and time to assess how well you measure up!

- Service record (microfiche & PSR/OSR)
- Letter to the board (optional - you decide)
- Reputation with a board member (best case: unlikely)

Competitive Records (1 of 3)
Positive Indicators

- Sustained performance breakout
  - Promotion recommendation, especially in “traffic”
  - Grade consistently above reporting senior’s average (summary group AND cumulative average)
  - Block 41 comparison to other officers
- Multiple tours in tough leadership positions and doing well
  - CO/OIC, XO, Dept Head, Training Officer
  - Command billet selection process well understood
    - Distinction between interim fill and board-selected COs

Competitive Records (2 of 3)
Positive Indicators

- Breadth of Experience
  - Variety of jobs and units
- Extra ADT/ADSW with significant accomplishments
  - Not viewed favorably if regular fitreps are mediocre
- Personal awards
  - Not essential, but helps
- Significant civilian expertise relevant to the Navy
  - Must demonstrate that it is being applied

Competitive Records (3 of 3)
Positive Indicators

- Clear and complete record
- Advanced degrees
- Recent photo
- Letter to the Board with **relevant** info

Detractors (1 of 3)
Your record may be non-competitive if ...

- Declining promotion rec under same reporting senior with no explanation in fitrep
- XO tour without an EP recommendation
  - Especially when other in summary group receives EP
- Shows little professional growth
  - Homesteading without moving up in job responsibility
  - Not seeking out and taking tough jobs
- Missing fitreps, particularly recent ones

Detractors (2 of 3)
Your record may be non-competitive if ...

- You submit huge letter to the board, especially when it:
  - ⋯ does not provide important missing info, particularly:
    - fitreps (most recent are critical)
    - explanations of breaks in service or other irregularities
  - ⋯ contains irrelevant information
    - Opinions and emotional prose
    - AT & IDTT orders, travel claims, W-4 forms, page 2s, etc
  - ⋯ duplicates information already in service record
    - Indicates officer not reviewing their record, interpreted as indifference towards career
    - However, send it if in doubt
  - ⋯ contains letters of recommendation, unless highly relevant, or written by reporting senior to explain previous low ranking

Detractors (3 of 3)
Your record may be non-competitive if ...

- You have spent many years with same unit and not obtained required quals (e.g., MSC)
- No personal awards
  - Not a problem if good performance breakout shown in fitreps and OSR/PSR
  - Less important at O-5 than at O-6 board
- Fitreps/evals over-emphasize collateral duties and civic/volunteer activities
  - Indicator of few accomplishments
  - No room for this info on fitreps of top performers
- Contains old picture
  - Particularly with previous rank

Observations (1 of 4)
From Line Officer Boards

- Leadership valued over expertise
- Block 41 reviewed closely
  - Weak comments and lack of specific accomplishments interpreted as indicators of mediocre performance
  - Feigned praise is easily recognized
- Performance from commissioning was reviewed and briefed
  - Outstanding active service tended to offset short, mediocre reserve records

Observations (2 of 4)
From Line Officer Boards

- Out-of-community assignments
  - Performance break-out interpreted as very strong indicator
  - Lack of performance breakout
    - No problem if small number of fitreps and otherwise strong record
    - Derogatory if most of career spent outside of community
- Many COs not using their EPs
  - EPs left blank with strong write-up sent mixed message
- Fiche 5s reviewed closely
  - Even severe NJP not a killer if later performance showed officer learned lesson

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Observations (3 of 4)
From Line Officer Boards

- Recent transfer to IRR not always kiss of death
  - Competitive records given benefit of doubt
  - Intentions explained in Letter to Board is very helpful
- VTU considered a detractor only when obvious that reservist is just marking time
- Significant breaks in service not automatic killer
  - Often accepted if good record and explanation provided in letter to board

Observations (4 of 4)
From Line Officer Boards

- Previous FOS not an automatic killer
  - Board weighed heavily the total record and significant performance improvement since the FOS
- Community orientation at start of each board
  - Member from each warfare community briefed what to look for in an outstanding record
  - Good briefing is very helpful
- Board Members' Personal Knowledge
  - Positive comments on reporting seniors and individuals invited
  - Negative comments specifically prohibited

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Recommendations (1 of 4)
ALL SELRES

Don’t Stagnate - Manage Your Career

- Take on leadership positions & challenging jobs
  - Seek command as soon as you are ready
- Change units and jobs to broaden experience

Know When You Are up Before the Board

- Watch BUPERS home page at beginning of FY
  - Promotion zone messages, board convening dates

Recommendations (2 of 4)
ALL SELRES

Maintain Your Record

- Submit copies of all missing and illegible fitreps, but last-minute submissions can cause problems
  - Fitreps invalidated due to admin discrepancies cannot be considered
  - Cumulative and summary group averages of reporting senior are not included in PSR for last-minute fitrep submissions
- Review and Correct OSR/PSR
  - Top Sheet: College degrees, NOBCs, awards
  - Bottom sheets: Missing entries, correct trait grades, summary group information, obvious errors in reporting senior average
- Update official photograph, NRQQ

Recommendations (3 of 4)
ALL SELRES

Submit a Letter to the Board

- Include only relevant, factual information
  - Missing fitreps
    - recent ones are critical!!!
  - Recent (last few months) photo
    - photo in current paygrade is okay
  - Significant letters of Commendation/Appreciation
  - Relevant **facts** that are not otherwise obvious
    - Extra drilling and duty (ADSW/ADT)
      - include noteworthy accomplishments
    - Long-distance commuting
  - Recent change in assignment not shown in record

Recommendations (4 of 4)
ALL SELRES

Submit a Letter to the Board (cont'd)

- Explain breaks in service, unusual circumstances
  - IRR, delay in affiliation, extended AAs
  - Irregularities not easily explained in the record
- Keep it short (1 page) and objective

Visit BUPERS Reserve Selection Board Websites

- All the information you need
  - Promotion zone messages, how to update your record, viewing your PSR, board membership, explanation of board mechanics, etc.
- Selection boards (Os & Es): http://www.bupers.navy.mil/selectbd/

Recommendations
REPORTING SENIORS

- Rotate personnel through major jobs
  - Encourage and enable professional growth
  - Provide opportunities to break-out
  - Move them out when its time
- Train wardroom
  - Promotion process, career & service record management
- Serve on promotion board
  - Encourage your personnel to serve as well

Board Preparation
Suggested Timeline

9 months before board

- Order microfiche and OSR/PSR
- Thoroughly review record
- Submit recent photograph, corrections, and missing items

5 months before board

- Re-order record and verify corrections from 9-month review entered properly

1 month before board

- Prepare and submit **short** letter to the board
  - Usually need to include most recent fitrep

Conclusion

- Promotion process is a search for most qualified future leaders, NOT a reward for good service
- Key to promotion is continuous career management that starts early
- Record maintenance is essential to ensure that the board can select the best officers